

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

FOR

SUBJECT Zbigniew Brzezinski Interviewed

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What is now happening in Iran is unclear. We have no confirmation that the hostages have been removed. It is not clear, if they're removed, in whose custody they would be re-

tained. In any case, we continue to hold the Iranian government responsible for the safety and well-being of these people.

Insofar as the bodies are concerned, President Bani-Sadr said, and honorably, that they will be retained -- removed and returned to us immediately. We hold him to his word, and we'll see whether the events, literally within the next hours or days, justify our faith in his words.

CLARK: If the hostages have indeed been removed to other locations, how seriously would you view this? And is there anything we can do about it?

BRZEZINSKI: Obviously, there's nothing we can do about it, because we do not have control over the hostages. Much depends on whose custody they will be retained in.

We will continue our efforts, all efforts, to obtain their release. And I believe that one of the very important lessons to be drawn from the events of the last few days by everyone concerned is that the United States and the President of the United States is prepared to do all that is necessary to obtain their release, and will persist in these efforts -- I repeat, will persist in these efforts.

SAM DONALDSON: Well, Dr. Brzezinski, he can do all that is necessary, but what can he do? He's played a card. It failed. You said it was an honorable card, and I'm not arguing with that. But it failed.

What next?

BRZEZINSKI: First of all, there is the longer-term track, which involves collective actions designed to bring home to the Iranians, and particularly to those Iranians who are responsible for the fate of their country, that the continued political paralysis and international isolation of Iran which the hostage situation is engendering is bringing ruin to Iran itself. The country is gradually disintegrating.

DONALDSON: Now, you have said that for a long time.

BRZEZINSKI: ...are falling apart.

DONALDSON: Excuse me. You've said that for a long time.

BRZEZINSKI: Its enemies are gathering force. Responsible Iranians have to contemplate the consequences of this for Iran. And if a peaceful resolution is to be found, they have to play their role.

[Confusion of voices]

DONALDSON: If I may just ask about that. You and the President and other Administration officials have made that point for a long time, but it seemed to get us nowhere. Apparently, you didn't believe enough in that point to let it play out. You took this action which failed.

BRZEZINSKI: We have made that point for a long time. But we are playing the situation here that unfolds slowly. We have adopted certain steps ourselves to bring home to Iran that Iran's well-being is being adversely affected by what it had done. More recently, these steps have been strengthened by allied solidarity. The fact that Iran is increasingly ostracized in the world is a psychological, political, and economic situation which no responsible Iranian can ignore.

[Confusion of voices]

BRZEZINSKI: If you could perhaps agree on which of you is going to ask questions, it would make it easier for me to answer.

DONALDSON: We have the same question. Are you now conceding that it is a long-term proposition, that those hostages will be there a long time?

BRZEZINSKI: We're not conceding anything of the sort. What I'm saying is that one has to have a long-term strategy for dealing with a problem which may last a long time or which might be resolved more rapidly. In addition to that, one has the obligation to consider alternative courses of action which might resolve this problem more promptly.

The rescue operation which the President ordered undertaken was planned, literally, from the first week of the hostage seizure. We undertook it at a time when we thought it was opportune. We certainly intend to work peacefully, if possible, to resolve this problem.

CLARK: But hasn't the failure of that rescue mission effectively ended any prospect for early release of the hostages?

BRZEZINSKI: I would not draw that conclusion. I hope that it brings home to Teheran a very important message, which until a week ago the Iranians were inclined to discount. And the message is this: Do not scoff at American power. Do not scoff at American reach. It is in Iran's interest to resolve this problem peacefully. It is our preference to resolve it peacefully.

CLARK: Do you think the failure of the rescue mission

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and the angry reaction of the Iranians to that mission increases or decreases the prospects for use of military power on our part?

BRZEZINSKI: I cannot answer that question because I do not know exactly how the balance of rationality versus irrationality plays out in Teheran. My hope is that there are enough Iranian leaders within the revolution, which we recognize now is a fact, who are concerned about Iran's well-being and realize that the perpetuation of this situation is likely to produce conditions for Iran which might be disastrous for its national well-being.

CLARK: Well, you speak of the support we're not receiving from our allies. But hardly anyone believes that economic sanctions are going to effect early release of the hostages. Wouldn't you agree with that?

BRZEZINSKI: I'm not sure whether everybody feels that way. Our allies have concluded that a somewhat different sequence of steps than we would have preferred is now to be applied, namely, political sanctions first, followed by economic sanctions.

Our collective judgment is that this is the best way to bring home to the Iranians the reality that they live in a very vulnerable part of the world, to remind them that in the past they have been subject to foreign domination, particularly Russian Soviet, and that they are therefore creating conditions which may end up being very painful to themselves.

DONALDSON: Well, Dr. Brzezinski, are you saying, in all of what you have said so far, that we are going to attempt another type of military operation against Iran or -- in an attempt to free the hostages? And if so, how can we do that?

BRZEZINSKI: I am weighing my words very carefully. I'm saying that we are pursuing a collective policy designed to bring home to the Iranian leaders, those who are responsible, the advantages of a peaceful solution, a peaceful resolution to an illegal, abhorrent act which the entire international community rejects.

We reserve to ourselves the right to pursue every course of action open to us to redress a situation in which we are the victims of an illegal, indeed of a belligerent act.

DONALDSON: But to do what? Let me say to you that Secretary Brown, Defense Secretary Brown, yesterday, in discussing this problem, said one of the reasons why you didn't mine the harbors or attempt the blockade was because that would internationalize the problem, perhaps widen it, and perhaps not have the desired effect.

Has that changed today? Could you go back now to a blockade strategy?

BRZEZINSKI: I will not discuss specific options, because specific options depend, in their utility or disutility, on the particular circumstances in which they are applied. All I can say is that the United States has a political and a moral obligation to do what it can to redress this issue.

We undertook the rescue operation knowing full well that it was risky. We calculated very precisely its chances of success. We felt they were sufficiently high to warrant this activity, because we have a moral obligation to help our people. We also have a political obligation to try to bring this problem to an end if the Iranians themselves are not capable of reaching the requisite decisions.

DONALDSON: ...Secretary Vance had very grave doubts about this operation, and Secretary Brown had some also. What were they?

BRZEZINSKI: Everyone recognized that the operation was risky. We also know from history that there are moments in which a certain amount of risk has to be taken. We calculated very closely what the risks were. We knew that we were undertaking something which involved risk. We also knew that the stakes involved were very high.

After a full weighing of this, after many exercises, after many tests, after weeks of meticulous planning, after extensive discussions in the National Security Council, in which all of the President's advisers took part, the President took the right decision, took the courageous decision.

DONALDSON: Was it just bad luck...

BRZEZINSKI: And I believe that this is a decision which the American people support.

I will say, for myself, that I am proud to have been associated with it. I'm proud of what we tried to do. I'm particularly proud of the American men who volunteered to go and to do what was necessary to be done.

DONALDSON: Was it just bad luck, then, that it failed? It was not a question of a bad plan?

BRZEZINSKI: I believe the plan was good. The plan was extremely complex, because of the difficulties involved, the enormous distances involved. Some of the precautions taken by the other side had to be taken into account.

In an operation of this sort, you always have to have luck on your side, to some extent, to succeed. And bad luck can abort a situation. This situation was aborted initially without

any loss of life. The loss of life, unfortunately, took place during the evacuation process, due to an air collision. These things happen sometimes. Yesterday's headline...

CLARK: Dr. Brzezinski...

BRZEZINSKI: ...spoke not only of eight American dead, but of some 140 Englishmen dead who died in an airplane crash in the Canary Islands. These things do happen.

CLARK: Dr. Brzezinski, our allies, as you well know, have been concerned from the start that we would take some sort of military action that would inflame the situation and escalate the risk of confrontation, even war, with Iran or the Soviet Union. They now seem more concerned than ever after this rescue mission and its failure.

If we do get to the point where we have to take -- feel we have to take military action, would you inform the allies so there would not be this bad feeling again?

BRZEZINSKI: Let me differentiate, first of all, between a sustained military operation and a rescue operation, which is necessary...

CLARK: I'm thinking of something like the seeding of mines in Iranian harbors...

BRZEZINSKI: ...an action of a more sustained kind would be an action which would lend itself to advance consultation.

Insofar as allied reactions are concerned, let me say this: Our initial judgments are that public opinion abroad understands the necessity for a rescue operation. And indeed, some of our allies themselves have undertaken such rescue operations. The Germans did, the French did.

Secondly, the President has already received a number of extremely warm personal messages from his associates, the leaders of our principal allies, indicating their close support and understanding for the action we took.

CLARK: We want to talk more in a minute or two about the extreme concern of some of our allies about military escalation in the Persian Gulf area.

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SAM DONALDSON: Dr. Brzezinski, you said that you would consult our allies in a sustained military operation if that is something that the President contemplates. I assume you also

would consult Congress.

BRZEZINSKI: Of course.

DONALDSON: In advance.

BRZEZINSKI: Of course.

DONALDSON: Let me ask you a question about the bodies that we asked earlier on. It is said now by the Ayatollah Be-heshti that we have to pay a price, some sort of price to get the bodies back of our dead. Is that acceptable?

BRZEZINSKI: If that is true, it's another step down in the moral degradation of a country which has had, actually, a very impressive, occasionally glorious, tradition. In addition to trading in hostages, if the Iranian authorities now begin to trade in bodies, I think it is an indication of the depth to which they have sunk. And this will further contribute to their international condemnation and isolation.

DONALDSON: But, in fact, I take it there's nothing we could do about it. Or would we be willing to do something if they asked for a price?

BRZEZINSKI: Your questions keep pointing to the fundamental dilemma we face -- namely, that a group of terrorists, apparently with some complicity of the government, are holding our fellow countrymen. Our efforts over the past few months have been designed to obtain their release. These efforts will persist. We'll use whatever is necessary to obtain their release. I believe we have demonstrated in the last week how determined we are and how far we can reach.

DONALDSON: Well, is the answer to my question no?

BRZEZINSKI: This applies to the bodies. Obviously, we cannot get the bodies out, any more easily than the hostages.

DONALDSON: Would we pay a price for them?

BRZEZINSKI: We are not in the body-buying business. We are willing to do what is necessary, through intermediaries or directly, to obtain a dignified and human resolution of the body issue, if that is a new issue the Iranians wish to create. I find it, simply as a human being, from a moral point of view, degrading to think that anyone would do that. Traditionally, even enemies return the bodies of warriors.

I hope we don't embark on excessive speculation on this subject until we know for a fact that this degrading reality confronts us.

CLARK: If we can return to the question of our allies' concern that the situation in the whole Persian Gulf area is getting out of hand and that we may, indeed, be heading toward a very serious confrontation with the Soviet Union. Is -- will our decision on whether or not to take any military action, will it be based on a very careful appraisal of how the Soviets might react to this?

BRZEZINSKI: I think it's important to look at the situation in the region in a wider perspective. We're dealing not only with the hostage issue in Iran, we're dealing with the progressive disintegration of Iran as a political entity. The country's polarized and, to some extent, increasingly radicalized. At the same time, the Soviets are in the process of occupying Afghanistan.

We are dealing, therefore, with a significant expansion of Soviet power southward. This does pose, potentially, a significant danger to the Persian Gulf, a region of vital interest to Western Europe and to Japan and to us. This is why there is a wider dimension, a strategic dimension to this problem.

CLARK: Well, there are many who think it also poses a very significant danger to us. And even Barry Goldwater this past week, who has been one of the leading hawks in Congress over the week -- over the years, has said that he fears we are being pulled toward a confrontation with Russia and a war for which we are not prepared.

BRZEZINSKI: I think it's important to remember that since World War II, there first emerged the central strategic zone of Western Europe. The second central strategic zone for us was the Far East. In both cases, we have permanently stationed American forces. The third central strategic zone is Southwest Asia, the Persian Gulf. There are no forces there. Iran, Turkey, to some extent Pakistan, Afghanistan is a buffer with a protective shield. That shield has now been pierced.

As a consequence, our friends in the region and our vital interests in this third central strategic zone are beginning to be threatened. This is why this is becoming a strategic problem.

CLARK: You say there are no forces today in the Persian Gulf area. Isn't that the whole nub of the problem, that we may be moving toward a war for which we simply are not prepared?

BRZEZINSKI: Well, first of all, it's not true to say that there are no American forces in the area. We have taken, under the President's leadership, in the course of the last several months, deliberate steps to augment our military presence.

We now have two aircraft carrier task forces in the area, with considerable air punch. We are developing a search capability so that we can inject our forces rapidly. We are intensifying our political/military consultations with some of the countries concerned. We're working closely with those who are not directly involved in our military efforts, but would benefit from them.

For example, Saudi Arabia, who is a staunch friend and in whose leadership we have high confidence,...

CLARK: But Saudi Arabia is also very concerned about our taking any military action that might upset...

BRZEZINSKI: You didn't let me complete my thought.

Saudi Arabia, which is a staunch friend and which has a leadership in whom we have high confidence, has been extremely helpful to us on international economic issues. We recognize the need to create an environment which is secure, while respecting the Arab desire to protect their sovereignty, through the absence of foreign bases on their soil.

DONALDSON: Dr. Brzezinski, some of the American allies and some of the American public have been saying that President Carter is really not competent, and that this is another indication that he's not up to the job. I assume that you do not accept that. But does that not complicate the problem now of working with our allies and also of trying to formulate a new policy?

BRZEZINSKI: You know, that's such an absurd statement that I don't think one should spend too much time refuting it, but I'll take a minute or two just to remind you that this is the President who obtained the Panama Canal treaties, against enormous odds. This is the President who obtained the first peace treaty ever between Israel and an Arab country. This is the President which moved us in a position to implement genuine reconciliation in Southern Africa on the basis of majority rule. This is the President who bit the bullet on normalization of relations with China, thereby very greatly improving our geo-strategic position in the world. This is the President who provided the leadership to strengthen NATO, through a long-term development program. This is the President who has taken difficult decisions to increase the defense budget in peacetime.

It's a pretty good record in three years, much better than some of our predecessors.

DONALDSON: I did not want to interrupt you because I thought it was only fair for you to be able to make that case. But the polls seem to suggest that people are not confident in this President's ability to handle this particular crisis. That curve has been going down.

Let me ask you the auxiliary question. Wasn't one of the reasons Mr. Carter took the action that you took this past week because of the political factor, that he saw he had to do something?

BRZEZINSKI: Absolutely not. We took it because with the refinement of the rescue plan, at some point we concluded that the rescue plan was a viable option. Once the negotiating track had run out of steam, towards the end of March, and once we had indications from the other side that they were determined to continue holding the hostages indefinitely, we knew we had a narrow window left for the rescue option before the nights became too short and also the temperature too hot for an operation which included air-breathing machines over long territory.

DONALDSON: Well, you do seem to agree, in what you have said just then and previously, that the rescue option is no longer there.

BRZEZINSKI: No, I do not agree that the rescue option is not there. I'll not speculate on rescue options.

One particular aspect of that rescue option has obviously been compromised. But I will not speculate on what can be done. I will only repeat what I have said many times before. Let everyone draw an important lesson from this. This President and this country will do what is necessary, and we have the means for doing it. And one setback doesn't shape the future.

DONALDSON: We wouldn't go to war with Iran, would we?

BRZEZINSKI: We will take actions which are appropriate. We prefer to resolve this problem peacefully through collective pressure. We hope, as I have said many times on this program, the Iranians will reach the right conclusion. But we are not going to sit indefinitely and have belligerent acts imposed upon us.

CLARK: The 15 diplomats who have been held hostage for the past two months in Bogota, Colombia apparently have been removed from the embassy there this morning and are en route somewhere by plane. Can you tell us what you know about that?

BRZEZINSKI: Yes. We are very hopeful that within hours there will be a resolution, a positive resolution of this issue. And we expect to have good news, including our own principal representative, very, very shortly.

CLARK: Is this some sort of a compromise that has been struck with the militants or terrorists who have held them so that some of their leader -- their imprisoned leaders would be released from jail?

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BRZEZINSKI: The Colombian government was responsible for handling these negotiations, and I do not wish to pre-empt the specific information that will be released at the time when the good news -- and I trust it will be good news for all of us -- is made public.

CLARK: Do you know whether it is true that some of the diplomats are being flown to Cuba?

BRZEZINSKI: It may be the case. But I don't want to go beyond confirming the fact that I think good news will shortly be released.

DONALDSON: By the way, back to Iran. Iran is claiming that the government of Iraq has been overthrown and its president been killed. Do you know anything about that?

BRZEZINSKI: I haven't heard any information to confirm that. I don't believe that Radio Teheran has an established standard of accuracy and veracity.

DONALDSON: Another question on the hostages. The militant terrorists are once again threatening to try them. What would be our response?

BRZEZINSKI: Our position on this subject has been known previously. I believe publicly on November 20th of last year. We stand by that. And the action we undertook last week probably reinforces the credibility of our position.

CLARK: Thank you very much, Dr. Brzezinski for being with us on Issues and Answers.

WASHINGTON, April 26 — Officials closely associated with the attempt to rescue the American hostages in Iran acknowledged today that the operation was one of the most difficult ever attempted by the United States military. But they asserted that the mission had been worked out with painstaking care, including the use of paramilitary forces infiltrated into Teheran in recent months.

The forces, which were said to have entered Iran using forged foreign passports, were to assist the 50-member commando team in its effort to storm the American Embassy in Teheran and free the 50 hostages there, the officials said.

Military experts in and out of Government have begun to raise questions about key aspects of the mission:

“Why did the Administration rely on such a small force for such a difficult military operation?”

“Why was the mission aborted when the American forces still possessed five working helicopters for use in the rescue operation?”

“Even if the force had been able to get to Teheran, how did the Administration expect to be able to free the hostages and get them out of Iran without major loss of life?”

Congressional Hearings Expected

Although Senator Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington, has already called the mission “nothing short of a disaster,” the Administration so far has escaped wide public criticism. But White House and Pentagon aides expect to come under heavy fire during the next few weeks, if, as expected, the Senate and House armed services committees hold hearings.

Anticipating this, officials emphasized that the Administration’s rescue mission had been approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and every other senior military officer involved in the operation. According to the officials, the overall commander was an Army major general, James B. Vaught. An Air Force general, Philip Gast, the former chief of the American military advisory mission in Teheran, was also involved in commanding the mission, they added. The ground commander was Col. Charlie A. Beckwith of the Army.

Although some high-ranking military officers expressed doubts over whether a 50-member force could succeed in freeing the hostages, officials close to the mission said that the Administration had earlier considered using an even smaller military team for storming the embassy grounds in Teheran. The officials said that the most important planning goal in the mission was to avoid detection and that this required a minimum number of troops as well as helicopters and transport aircraft.

Officials Describe Painstaking Plan Of Military and Agents Sent to Iran

By RICHARD BURT

Special to The New York Times

Special Procedures Required

The priority placed on avoiding detection, officials said, also forced the military team to work out extraordinary procedures, such as flying helicopters at night over long distances without radio communications and refueling without lights. One official said that when planning for the mission got under way last November “for two months nobody thought it was possible.”

Another said the desire to avoid detection was an important factor in deciding to launch the helicopters from the aircraft carrier Nimitz in the Arabian Sea rather than using a base on land, which might have led to detection of the helicopters by the Soviet Union and other nearby powers.

In a briefing for reporters today, a senior Administration aide said that in retrospect a larger force of helicopters would have enabled the mission to proceed after the American team lost three of the aircraft in the initial leg of the mission from the Nimitz to the airstrip 200 miles south of Teheran. But the official said that even adding two additional helicopters to the original force of eight would have created serious new logistical problems.

Apart from the helicopter issue, there were questions about how the American team was actually going to move into the embassy compound and then leave with the hostages. Officials said the actual assault on the compound required the help of American agents provided by the Central Intelligence Agency and some special forces provided by the American military who were gradually infiltrated into the city early this year.

Landing Area for Copters Located

These agents, working with Iranians opposed to the existing Government in Teheran, are said to have laid plans for the assault on the embassy by locating a secure landing area for the helicopters outside Teheran. The American agents purchased trucks and other vehicles with which to transport the commando team to the embassy from the helicopter landing area, they said.

The rescue plan, according to the officials, called for the helicopters to arrive at a landing area near Damavand, a mountainous region east of Teheran, early yesterday morning. During the day, the helicopters and the commando team were to remain hidden at the landing area.

Yesterday, officials said, the commando team was to be moved into Teheran aboard the trucks provided by and driven by the C.I.A. and Pentagon officers. The first stop, they added, was to be a warehouse on the outskirts of Teheran where last-minute briefings for the commando team were scheduled.

Following the briefings, the commando team was to move to the embassy in the trucks.

Officials said that a detailed attack plan for attacking the embassy had been prepared, based mainly on American blueprints of the buildings on the compound and extensive, last-minute reconnaissance. The placement of electric and telephone lines had been pinpointed, they said, and individual commandos had the responsibility for cutting these lines.

One official said that once the militants guarding the embassy had been “neutralized” and the hostages collected the helicopters would have been called in from the mountain base outside the city. The helicopters, each able to carry about 40 passengers, were supposed to evacuate all the commandos, the hostages, the American paramilitary units and the Iranian agents, less than 200 people in all.

The officials said that if it proved impossible to land the helicopters at the embassy, the Americans were to have moved to the Arjandieh soccer stadium, located a few hundred yards from the compound, where they would then be airlifted out.

From Teheran, the helicopters were to fly to Desert Two, officials said, an abandoned airstrip in a remote area west of Teheran to rendezvous with the six C-130 air cargo planes flown into the country on Thursday. At this point, they said, all the helicopters were to be abandoned and everyone was to have flown out of the country aboard the C-130’s.

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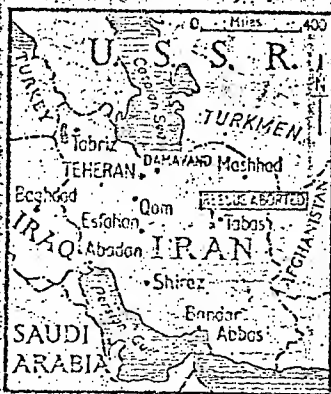
CIA men go into hiding

By FRANK TAYLOR in Washington

TWO teams of special agents who had been infiltrated into Iran over the past three months were to have taken part in the abortive mission to rescue American hostages from Teheran, it was disclosed yesterday.

The teams—one made up of agents from the Central Intelligence Agency and the other of commandos from the American Special Forces—are still hiding in Iran.

American officials confirmed that teams had entered Iran using forged passports, but



would not discuss how it was now proposed to get them out.

They are believed to have linked up with Iranian sympathetic to the American cause and to be under their protection.

President Carter ordered the teams to begin infiltrating Iran in January in preparation for the rescue attempt. They were told to make a thorough reconnaissance of the American Embassy compound in Teheran where 50 hostages were being held and to establish a secure base near Damavand, in a mountainous area east of Teheran.

They were also to buy vehicles for use in the final assault on the embassy.

Last Thursday the agents and commandos were waiting at Damavand for the rescue troops who were to arrive in helicopters. But the mishaps which plagued the troops in the desert 200 miles south of Teheran led to the whole operation being abandoned and the

agents being left to fend for themselves.

The plan called for the 90-strong rescue force to link up with the agents and commandos at Damavand and to rest there until Friday. The agents and commandos were then to lead the troops into Teheran in the vehicles bought for the job.

The first stop was to be at a warehouse on the outskirts of the city where a final briefing would take place. Then the troops, commandos and agents were to move into the centre of the city for the attack on the compound.

From blueprints of the embassy every room and corridor was known. Even the routes of telephone lines had been mapped and selected commandos told off to cut them during the initial assault. Officials discounted reports that the rescuers were to use a non-lethal chemical to disable the militants holding the hostages.

Once the captors were overpowered, the rescuers were to call in the helicopters by radio. If the helicopters had trouble landing in the compound, the rescuers and the hostages were to drive to the Ampadieh football stadium a few hundred yards away to board the helicopters.

The helicopters were to fly to a rendezvous with C-130 transport aircraft at an abandoned airstrip west of Teheran where the helicopters were to be abandoned.

But unknown to the agents and commandos waiting at Damavand, the mission was abandoned after the rescue troops lost three helicopters. Then came the collision between a helicopter and one of the C-130 planes, with the loss of eight lives.

The Armed Forces and Military Affairs Committees of Congress are expected to hold inquiries into the failed mission in the coming weeks and some of the main questions will centre on the breakdown of the helicopters.

The rescue troops were part of the so-called Blue Light anti-terrorist unit which is based at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. The troops are also known as "Charlie's Angels" because they are under the command of Col Charles Beckwith, who was a Green Beret (Special Forces) commander in the Vietnam War.

Defense Department says rescuers lacked nothing

By CHARLES W. CORDDRY
Washington Bureau of The Sun

Washington—The failure of the rescue mission in Iran inevitably has focused attention on the combat-readiness of American military men and machines, and on how much it may be suffering because of low pay and insufficient money for training, maintenance and operations.

Defense Department officials, conceding worrisome losses of trained manpower, contended yesterday, however, that to link this and related equipment difficulties with the rescue effort was to confuse two different problems.

The rescue force was an elite, composite unit forged from men and equipment of the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force, they said. They contended it lacked nothing in training and machines, whatever problems beset the services in general.

The mission that had to be aborted Thursday in the Iranian salt desert, informed sources disclosed, was under the overall command of Army Maj. Gen. James B. Vaught, a paratrooper, ranger and former 24th Infantry Division commander, who most recently has served on the Army operations staff in the Pentagon. He was stationed at a secret location outside the borders of Iran.

The commander on the ground in Iran was Col. Charles A. Beckwith, the Green Beret Vietnam veteran who heads the joint-services Blue Light commando unit at Fort Bragg, N.C., which was the nucleus of the rescue force.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown, speaking yesterday on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation," underlined that it was random failures that brought down three of eight helicopters in the strenuous Iranian operation, and said: "I don't draw any conclusions about the general quality of our [service] maintenance" from the aborted mission.

Conclusions already were being drawn for the mission, however. Skilled people are leaving the service, increasing numbers of ships are reported in lowest conditions of readiness, and the number of combat-ready aircraft has fallen below service goals.

A congressional inquiry seemed automatic, therefore, to see whether a kingdom was lost for want of a nail, and to explore the readiness of the military forces in general.

This would appear to be the more important in light of the possibility that the United States may call on its forces to mine Iranian ports and come up beyond that—to impose a naval blockade against Iran if the American hostages are not freed after further diplomatic efforts.

Both Mr. Brown and Zbigniew Brzezinski, President's Carter's national security assistant, emphasized yesterday that the government is keeping open all its options. Mr. Brzezinski said that the message of the rescue attempt was, "Do not scoff at American power. Do not scoff at American reach."

In its most dramatic form, perhaps, the readiness problem as it relates to pay and the retention of skilled servicemen has been expressed by Melvin R. Laird, former defense secretary, in a study for the American Enterprise Institute, a think tank here.

Calling military pay "a national disgrace," Mr. Laird cited men who handle aircraft aboard aircraft carriers.

"In the course of his duties," Mr. Laird said of such a plane handler, "he handles F-14 aircraft, which cost \$25 million each, and helps operate a \$2 billion ship. Yet he makes less per hour than a cashier at McDonald's, lives below the poverty level, is eligible for food stamps and has not seen his wife and child for six months."

Plane handlers and all other crewmen aboard the aircraft carrier Nimitz had been at sea 112 days when the eight helicopters were launched Thursday for the Iranian operation.

Among the inquiries to be expected now will be an assessment of the effects of such long terms at sea—in crowded, hot, noisy, boring conditions—on men maintaining ships and aircraft.

Administration sources said, meanwhile, that they expected to be able to reveal soon in "elaborate detail" the plan for the rescue of the hostages. Thus far, apparently to allow persons cooperating in the mission time to get out of Tehran, details have been revealed only to that point in the mission where it was necessary to order withdrawal of the force from the salt desert.

Sources indicated that the remainder of the plan, involving ground vehicle and helicopter movement on the American embassy compound, will be revealed for two chief reasons:

- The administration is intensely interested in demonstrating that it had a good plan, with a chance of succeeding in rescuing the hostages, and wants to give its version before a "distorted" version comes from the Iranians, who say they have found maps and papers in abandoned helicopters.

- It wants to boost the morale of the people who planned and participated in what is regarded as a good military plan

28 April 1980

'Friendlies' in Iran Aided Rescue Try

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

Secret cooperation from inside Iran was a major reason American military planners felt they could snatch U.S. hostages out of the embassy compound in Tehran with little or no bloodshed, government officials said yesterday.

The "friendlies," as sources called them to protect identities, worked at two places in Iran to help the American rescue team from the elite Blue Light unit.

The first spot was a mountain hideaway about 100 miles outside Tehran. If it had not been for too many helicopters breaking down during the first stage of the rescue operation last Thursday, the 90 troopers would have flown there in six helicopters. They would have stayed hidden in their mountain lair during the daylight hours of last Friday.

While the American rescue party was preparing to go to the mountain hideaway, the "friendlies" were rounding up innocent looking trucks and buses to put near the base for the troopers' use. This presumably took some doing and involved high risk, although sources did not go into the specifics.

The rescue plan called for the troopers to ride in these trucks and buses from the mountain hideaway into Tehran during the second night of the operation.

After assessing nighttime traffic, sources said, planners concluded that the civilian vehicles would blend into it without arousing suspicions. The troopers in the vehicles would have been concealed in some way.

The second assist in Iran came from a smaller group, officials said, which worked inside Tehran. Although sources would not confirm this, it is probable that the group included a couple of men—perhaps Americans—who could operate radio gear for communicating with the rescue party's helicopters.

Besides that direct help, sources said, the planners of the rescue mission received what they considered reliable information on what they would find when they reached the embassy compound in Tehran where 50 hostages were being held.

Although sources would not go into

it, it can be speculated that the troopers would know from this data when and where to enter the compound, where the militants' guards would be at that moment and the best way to subdue them without a firefight, relying mainly on surprise rather than on the chemical agents they carried.

Once the rescue team had rounded up the 50 embassy hostages and three others at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, sources said, the helicopters based at the mountain hideaway were to swoop down into the spacious compound, load up the rescuers and rescued and take them to another secret base well outside the city. C130 transport planes standing by there then were to fly everyone out of Iran, leaving the rescue helicopters behind.

A high military official indicated at a Pentagon briefing on Saturday that five helicopters would have been enough for this aerial rescue. He indicated this by saying that the plan called for flying six helicopters to the mountain base in the belief that one of them might not start after spending the day there, leaving five choppers functioning.

With five RH53 Sikorsky "Sea Stallion" helicopters being able to seat 35 people comfortably, 175 in all, the Joint Chiefs of Staff obviously were not leaving a lot of room for carrying any wounded on stretchers out of the compound. The 90-man rescue team, 53 hostages — and perhaps some of

the "friendlies" as yet unidentified — would have taken up most of the room on five helicopters.

With the cancellation of the rescue mission, the groups that worked for its success by direct action and supplying information have been dispersed. It is doubtful that such a network could be put together again anytime soon for another attempt at rescuing the hostages in Tehran.

Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) has speculated publicly that some part of the Iranian government might have been cooperating in the rescue effort, but there has been no confirmation of this by the U.S. government.

However, U.S. officials have said that they expected little bloodshed if the troopers did get inside the embassy. This came through in the following exchange at a Pentagon news conference on Friday with Defense Secretary Harold Brown:

Q. How could you have secured the release of the hostages without massive bloodshed, given the fact that there is an estimated 150 armed Iranian militants guarding the embassy?

A. I am not going to go into the details of any parts of the mission, beyond the parts that were actually carried out. I will say that the Joint Chiefs of Staff thoroughly reviewed this; I reviewed it, and the team itself was convinced that that was the part of the mission of which they were most confident.

A Hollywood scenario minus happy ending

By HARRISON RAINIE

Washington (News Bureau)—The Iranian military trucks slipped up to the entrance of the captured U.S. Embassy without a hitch. Only military vehicles were allowed on the streets of Tehran after the sundown curfew.

Along with sympathetic Iranians and an infiltration team, the 90-man American commando squad moved swiftly around the perimeter of the embassy, cutting phone and electric power lines and neutralizing the relatively few militants standing guard at their watch posts. Gas worked with some. Garrotes and guns had to be used on others.

The signal was given and an explosion blew a gaping hole in the walls of the now-awakening compound. Before the remaining embassy captors had sized up the situation, the trucks roared into the sprawling complex, and swarming U.S. commandos cut them down. Gas worked with some; garrotes and guns—with silencers—had to be used on others. The hostages were gathered for their flight to freedom.

A squadron of giant RH-53D navy Sea Stallion helicopters swooped into the embassy, scooped up the triumphant rescue team and its cargo and whisked them to the airfield where the revved-up C-130 transports barely waited for the doors to close before

they took off into the still-darkened skies.

A perfect ending to a painstakingly plotted rescue. But it was not to be. The Blue Light commandos never made it to the embassy. The second phase of the daring American rescue plan—the easiest phase, according to its planners—was never used because three of the helicopters broke down during the first phase. The margin of error was wiped out and the mission was canceled.

Around the Pentagon and the planning circles for the rescue plan, the saddest thoughts are what might have been.

If at least six of the eight RH-53D helicopters had managed to complete the gruelling 500-mile low-flying mission from the carrier Nimitz to the salt flat Desert One refueling stop, and if the refueling had gone smoothly instead of ending in a fiery crash that killed eight crewmen, an intricate rescue operation unmatched in logistical sophistication would have proceeded.

Though Carter administration officials have publicly not revealed any of the details of the second phase, other sources have described the operation this way:

The refueled helicopters would have moved from the first staging point 200 miles southeast of Tehran to a mountainous site—appropriately named Mountain Hideout—outside Tehran but shielded from Iranian authorities by the terrain. As dawn broke the equipment would have been camouflaged and the commandos would have stayed in hiding until the night returned.

The hiding spot was pinpointed by a team of Iranians who had joined the American rescue effort because of their disaffection with the revolutionary government and by infiltrators who had moved into the country a few weeks after the Nov. 4 embassy takeover for just such a rescue mission. Some were apparently with the Americans during the first phase of the mission, dressed in military uniforms.

This group—called assets by Acting Secretary of State Warren Christopher and friendlies by other officials—also had assembled a small armada of Iranian military vehicles at the mountain site.

At nightfall the rescue team would have boarded the trucks for the trip downtown to the embassy, first stopping at an abandoned warehouse (formerly owned by an American firm that pulled out after the revolution) for a final briefing on the outskirts of the city.

Months of preparations would have come into play once the team was at the embassy wall. As almost 30 practice missions at an embassy replica at the CIA training base at Camp Peary, Va., taught them, the team would have moved to cut telephone and electric lines. Each commando had an assignment—wipe out a technical gadget or take out a guard.

The practice drills also made them familiar with the guard posts, some of which had been left untended in recent weeks as the interest of the militants waned and fewer were available to staff the grounds at night. Most of the commandos were equipped with gas masks and there were some indications that a nonlethal gas was the first weapon that would have been used against those guards. If real trouble developed, long-barrel .22-caliber pistols with silencers, assassin specials now gaining favor with the mob, were at the ready.

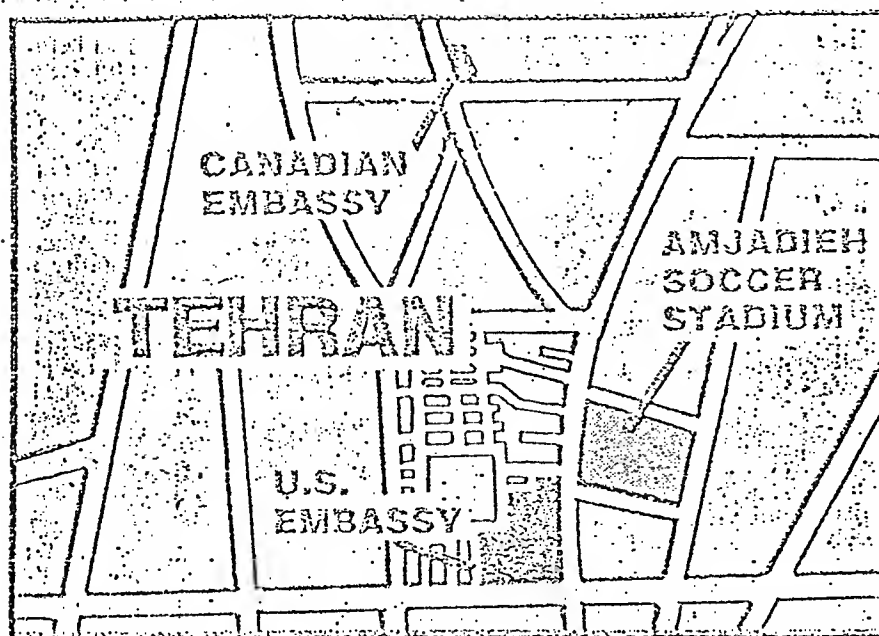
Once the initial resistance was quelled, explosives would have been used to rip away a section of the wall to get the trucks into the compound to unload more commandos for combat and to round up the 50 hostages. At the same time a smaller team would have invaded the Iranian Foreign Ministry where three American officials have been under a form of house arrest.

Then, depending on the response from Iranian military and police authorities, the hostages would have been rounded up at the embassy if fighting was light or they would have been moved to the nearby Amjadieh soccer stadium if fighting was heavy. The idea was to call in the helicopters to the most secure area, and the commando force was ready to fight through the streets of Tehran to find the safest part of town.

Holding the 53 hostages, the 90 American commandos and the undetermined number of friendlies, the helicopters, by then bearing pasted-on Iranian air force decals, would have taken the group to a second out-of-town airstrip. This one was west of Tehran and called Desert Two.

Abandoning the helicopters and leaving them behind, the group would have boarded the waiting C-130s. Presumably under air cover dispatched from other navy aircraft carriers in the region, the C-130s would have—and under the plan should have—flown to freedom.

CONTINUED



Robert Jullfrass/Daily News

After hostages were rounded up by American commandos, they would have been removed by helicopter from U.S. Embassy if resistance was light. If Iranian military response was heavy, hostages would have been moved to Amjadieh soccer stadium for removal by copters.

U.S. Task Force Planned to Free Three Diplomats

Small Group Was to Enter Iranian Foreign Ministry

By PHILIP TAUBMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 28 — Carter Administration officials said today that if the effort to rescue American hostages in Teheran had gone according to plan last week, United States paramilitary forces infiltrated into Iran early this year would have slipped into the Foreign Ministry to free three American diplomats held captive there since November.

Details of the plan to rescue the diplomats indicated that the assault at the Foreign Ministry would have been carried out by a small force of raiders in coordination with the main rescue attempt at the United States Embassy less than a mile away.

When the diplomats were free, according to officials close to the rescue mission, they would have been taken to the embassy and flown out of Teheran along with the 50 hostages held there.

Officials also revealed today that American intelligence agents infiltrated into Iran personally reconnoitered landing areas in the desert and near Teheran that had been selected for use by the rescue force. These inspections, which took place in recent weeks, indicated that the landing zones could be secured and would remain undetected during the rescue mission, officials said.

Traffic Came as Surprise

The appearance of a bus and a truck at the desert location just as American planes were landing last Thursday night was "completely unanticipated," according to one official. He said intelligence reports indicated that no vehicular traffic would be encountered.

The disclosure of additional details about the mission came as questions continued to arise about the feasibility of the rescue effort.

Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are scheduled to discuss the mission tomorrow in executive session. Hearings may follow, committee officials said.

The Senate Armed Services Committee announced today that it had begun an investigation into the breakdown of three RH-53 helicopters, which forced cancellation of the mission. Chairman John C. Stennis, Democrat from Mississippi, said the investigation would focus on maintenance, training, supplies and performance.

The House Armed Services Committee also announced that it would hold hearings on the mission next week.

Crews Unaware of Mission

These hearings and inquiries, officials said, will focus on several key questions raised in the aftermath of the mission.

Helicopter performance is one. Military officials acknowledged today that the eight helicopters used in the mission were maintained by crews aboard the aircraft carrier Nimitz that were unaware of the rescue mission and the strains it would place on the aircraft.

The helicopters used in the mission were also not the same ones that had been flown successfully in the United States during practice runs, officials said. Senior Administration officials have said that security considerations prevented transporting the helicopters used in practice to the Nimitz for use in the mission.

Another issue that will be examined, according to Senate investigators, is the command structure used in the mission. The mix of Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine personnel, plus the deployment of paramilitary forces in Teheran, created a potentially confusing line of command, officials said.

Congressional committees will also try to determine whether military officials were certain that the mission was feasible. Top civilian officials in the Administration denied today that the rescue operation had been scaled down by the White House to reduce the chances for bloodshed.

Several top military officers, however, suggested that Pentagon doubts about the mission had been overridden by the White House.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown said last week that he and senior military officers had approved the mission and considered it feasible.

LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH

30 April 1980

Rescue teams recruited 'moles' at embassy

By CLARE HOLLINGWORTH, Defence Correspondent

MORE than 100 Americans are hiding in Iran after the failure of the attempt to free the hostages held at the United States Embassy in Teheran. They include Farsi-speaking post-graduate students

CIA agents and members of the "Green Berets," the American Special Forces, were also included in teams

which have infiltrated into Iran since last Christmas.

Besides "Green Berets" — whose routine training often includes spells in Britain with the special Air Services at Hereford — the teams included students carrying genuine Iranian passports.

There are now American teams in Teheran and other urban areas of Iran. The general feeling is that as they never speak English and carry Turkish, Egyptian or Pakistani passports they will not be discovered.

Airstrip chosen

The first team to enter Iran inspected several disused airstrips but chose one in the desert near Tabas as their main communications and operational headquarters. Other teams arrived to disappear among Teheran's large middle class.

Iranian infiltrators made contact with the militants guarding the hostages through the university and obtained detailed information about their relations with the police, communications with them and the guards' organisations.

The Iranian members of the teams also persuaded several of the guards to become "moles" inside the embassy ready to assist in the escape of the hostages.

The teams reported that the vast majority of the Iranian middle class is tired of what they call "mob rule" but fearful that they will be taken over by the still-illegal pro-Russian Tudeh Communist party.

One of the main objectives of the teams was to cause confusion at the time of the rescue not only in the capital but throughout the country.

Streets would have been blocked with the cars of members of the middle classes who had agreed to co-operate. Bombs would have been detonated and fires started.

Iranian members of the teams had arranged that the nine of the hostages accused of spying would be the first to be evacuated in two helicopters belonging to the Iranian Army and piloted by Iranians.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
30 April 1980

U.S. Agents, Sent to Iran for Raid, Have All Departed, Military Says

By RICHARD HALLORAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 29 — American military officials said today that all the paramilitary agents infiltrated into Teheran for the rescue of American hostages had quietly slipped out of Iran the same way they entered early this year, posing as European businessmen.

The agents, whose number is unknown, included Special Forces troops, officials said.

Carter Administration officials also disclosed today that President Carter received a long briefing from the rescue mission's commanders at the White House on Saturday. On Sunday, the officials said, he flew to an undisclosed location to meet about 150 members of the rescue team.

The total rescue force numbered about 180. Half were commandos who would have assaulted the embassy; the others included aircraft crews, communications officers and other support forces.

The Special Forces troops who were infiltrated into Teheran were reported to belong to a unit in Europe containing people who speak European languages. They were reported to have bought a warehouse in Teheran that was to have served as a final staging area for the assault on the embassy.

Meanwhile, Gen. David C. Jones, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown called in reporters this afternoon in an effort to counter rumors and speculation flooding Washington about the rescue operation last week.

One rumor has held that the rescue mission was forced upon a reluctant Pentagon, General Jones said. "We want to be on the record that the Joint Chiefs of Staff take responsibility for the plan and the exercising and its implementation."

"Good Chance of Success"

He said that after much thought, all five of the Joint Chiefs, the nation's senior military council, concluded that the operation had "a good chance of success" and recommended to President Carter that "we go on April 24." Secretary Brown agreed and the President decided to do so.

Another rumor was that the military wanted a much larger operation but was forced by a timid White House to scale it back. General Jones and Mr. Brown said the military commanders had everything they needed. General Jones said, "We were not denied anything by anybody."

A third item of speculation has held that the commander on the ground, unofficially reported to have been Col. Charlie Beckwith, wanted to continue the operation despite the loss of three of the eight helicopters inside Iran. General Jones and Mr. Brown said that everyone from the mission commander to President Carter concurred in the recommendation from the ground commander to withdraw.

The secret meeting between President Carter and members of the rescue mission on Sunday was disclosed by the Speaker of the House, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts.

According to Mr. O'Neill's account of the meeting, which was based on a conversation with Mr. Carter, the President was impressed with the patriotism of the team. Mr. Carter told Mr. O'Neill that the servicemen stressed that they were honored to have participated in the mission and would be grateful to try again. Mr. Carter said that tears welled up in his eyes.

Iranian Plane Is Intercepted

In another development, Pentagon officials said that two Navy F-14 Tomahawk fighters intercepted an Iranian C-130 transport headed toward the American fleet in the Arabian Sea today in a "routine intercept." No shots were fired in the incident, which took place in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz, and the Iranian plane eventually turned back, the officials said.

In their briefing for reporters, General Jones and Secretary Brown disclosed fur-

ther details about the evolution of the plan to rescue the hostages.

General Jones said that soon after the hostages were seized on Nov. 4, the military started working on rescue plans. The planners came up with "many, many different options," the general said, but none seemed to have "a reasonable chance of success."

Even so, he said, the plans were tried out in exercises in which the forces were permitted all the troops, equipment and transport they wanted. "To my knowledge," said Secretary Brown, "nothing was denied by headquarters."

Turning Point In March

But the problems, General Jones said, appeared to be insurmountable. He did not elaborate, but other officers pointed to the distance from the United States, the lack of staging areas and threats to the lives of the hostages by their captors.

General Jones went on to say, however, that by early March, he and the other Joint Chiefs had "growing confidence" that a rescue operation was "militarily feasible." Part of the reason behind that was a record of successful practice runs in the United States.

Then in early April, he said, the service Chiefs presented the concept and received approval to proceed with the initial movement of forces. When the mission commander said they were ready to go into Iran, the Chiefs recommended to the President that the plan be executed.

Mr. Brown said that articles in The Washington Star and an Israeli newspaper about possible rescue missions had caused some concern, but that intelligence monitoring showed no signs of an alert in Iran.

Mr. Brown also said that the Soviet Union did not know about the operation, that the United States, contrary to a rumor, had not received a hot-line message from Moscow warning against the operation and that the United States told Moscow of the mission when it was over.

Rescue agents slip out of Iran

From Tribune Wire Services

AMERICAN military officials in Washington disclosed Tuesday night that all of the paramilitary agents infiltrated into Tehran to aid the rescue of the American hostages at the United States Embassy have quietly slipped out of Iran the same way they entered early this year—posing as European businessmen.

The agents, whose number is unknown, included Special Forces troops, officials said.

The report contradicted a story in Wednesday editions of the London Daily Telegraph which claimed that "more than 100 Americans, including specially trained servicemen and civilian agents," are still hiding in Iran.

The American commandos were to hide their helicopters last Friday at a secluded mountain site outside Tehran, U.S. sources said. Then, under darkness, they were to board trucks and filter into the traffic entering Tehran. Sources said the commandos had to depend on the agents to position the vehicles for the push on the embassy.

RELATED DEVELOPMENTS:

• Officials in Washington said President Carter had tears in his eyes at a secret rendezvous with 150 of the commandos who took part in the ill-fated rescue attempt. Carter slipped out of the White House Sunday to meet with the raiders at an undisclosed location without any fanfare or news coverage.

• The Raleigh [N.C.] News and Observer reported Wednesday that about 50 grim commandos involved in the futile mission returned to Ft. Bragg Tuesday. One frustrated man was quoted as saying: "You've got a mission. You know you can do it, and somebody tells you to pull out." Dressed in civilian clothes and carrying no personal luggage, the men arrived at the civilian airport in Fayetteville, N.C., aboard a Piedmont Airlines flight and were driven to the base, the newspaper said.

• Several retired military leaders said Tuesday the abrupt retreat of the U.S. rescue force was so unusual as to raise questions of whether all the facts of the aborted mission are known. Among the factors cited as unusual was failure of the commandos to destroy the helicopters left behind—an action all of those interviewed agreed was standard operating procedure on such missions.

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NEW YORK TIMES
3 MAY 1980

U.S. Had Plan for Strafing Teheran in Rescue Mission

By RICHARD BURT

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 2 — The United States plan for rescuing the hostages in Teheran included an option for calling in C-130 gunships that would have used flares to light up the American Embassy area and then strafe any Iranian troops moving toward the area, Government officials said today.

At the same time the officials said the Administration had been prepared to use the Navy's most advanced combat plane, the F-14 Tomcat to attack Iranian fighters attempting to interfere with the mission.

The general plans for using air power during the embassy raid were disclosed earlier this week. The officials provided new details today on military options that were open to President Carter. They stressed that the heavily armed gunship version of the C-130 and the fighters would have been ordered into action only in the event the 90-member assault team ran into trouble.

The gunships are equipped with advanced radar and infrared night detection equipment as well as an array of weaponry, including 20-millimeter Gatling guns, 40-millimeter Bofors cannons and a 105-millimeter howitzer.

Large Air Support Operation

The officials added that as part of the tactics of assuring the presence of aircraft near Teheran during the assault, the planners provided for large-scale air operations over and near Iran, involving two aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea, airborne warning-and-control-system aircraft and Air Force KC-135 tanker planes dispatched from Oman and other bases in the Persian Gulf region.

According to aides involved in planning the operation, a small number of C-130 gunships would have flown to Teheran on the night of the embassy raid. The planes,

they said, would have gone in low to avoid radar, much as the six C-130's reached the desert refueling site southeast of Teheran before the mission was canceled.

Fighters in Air Near Teheran

Simultaneously, F-14's and A-7 Corsair attack aircraft from the carriers Nimitz and Coral Sea would have been sent aloft, the officials said, and refueled in flight by tanker planes. The fighters were to have headed toward Teheran and would have arrived in the vicinity about the time the attack on the embassy was starting.

Like the C-130's the fighters would have relied on low-altitude flight, evasive maneuvers and electronic countermeasures to escape detection. According to one official, the Navy had been launching fighters at night and sending them toward the Iranian coast for several weeks before the mission. These feints, as the aide described them, were intended to accustom Iranian and Soviet monitors to American air activity.

Iran's Military Radio Monitored

A crucial aspect of the option for using air power, according to the account, was the ability of American intelligence to eavesdrop on Iranian military communications. The officials added that American commandos on the ground were assigned the task of repelling any civilians groups that approached the embassy grounds after being alerted to the rescue operation.

The officials said that American forces would have been able to intercept any messages ordering Iranian troops to the embassy compound and that within seconds the C-130's could have been sent to the area. Using high-intensity flares that would have created almost daylight conditions, the officials said, the gunships would have been able to destroy any Iranian forces moving toward the compound, including tanks.

They said that if the American commanders learned that Iranian fighter planes had been alerted, the Navy's F-14's could have flown to the scene swiftly. An aide said that it was the expectation of some senior officers that the F-14's would have been able to destroy any alerted Iranian fighters while they were preparing for takeoff.

Commenting on the overall size of the air mission, which would have required several back-up fighters and tankers, an official acknowledged that the risks of accidents, including collisions and crashes, was high. "But when you undertake these kinds of operations, you've got to be prepared to run risks," he said.

In discussing the decision to call off the mission at the desert refueling base, Pentagon officials continued to assert that there had been no disagreement among the commanders on the scene over the decision once it was learned that only five of six remaining helicopters was operable. But they divulged that a debate erupted between Col. Charlie A. Beckwith of the Army, the commando leader, and other officers at the desert site shortly after the six helicopters landed.

The officers said that two of the six helicopter pilots, who had flown through severe sandstorms, were exhausted and ill and there were questions whether they could continue. Colonel Beckwith, the officials said, strongly urged that the operation be continued and his advice was followed by Col. James Kyle of the Air Force, commander at the desert site.

Some officials suggested that after one of the helicopters sliced into a C-130, Colonel Beckwith quarreled with Colonel Kyle's decision to evacuate the refueling site swiftly without pausing to destroy the five intact helicopters being abandoned. A Pentagon spokesman strongly denied this report, saying that the helicopters had not been destroyed because of the perils from the burning and exploding ammunition-laden C-130.

CALCULATIONS STILL A MYSTERY

Iran Rescue Mission: How Were Risks Assessed?

and NORMAN KEMPSTER

—Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON—In all the second-guessing about the Iran raid, a recurring question has been how the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that the mission would have "a very good chance of success," as their chairman, Gen. David C. Jones, later said.

President Carter invited similar questions when he said there was a "general consensus" that each of the three phases of the mission would have a different chance of success: "most difficult" to put the U.S. rescue team into Iran undetected; "easiest" to actually rescue the hostages, and "second most difficult" to get the rescuers and hostages out of Iran.

Analysts dubious about such broad and subjective assessments ask, "Where are the calculations in that calculated risk?" More kindly put, the question is, What is the basis of those risk assessments?

No answers are yet available and there have been no assurances that a professional examination was conducted to assess the chances of success for each stage of the operation.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown said that to preserve secrecy, knowledge of the overall operation was confined to a "very, very small group of people—only those who had an absolutely essential part in the preparations." Whether any specialists in war games were among those who participated is not known.

Such experts normally conduct the so-called "scenario analysis" of each phase, then multiply each probability to arrive at the odds of success for the overall mission.

Thus, if the chances were 90% for success in the easiest phase, 70% for

the hardest and 80% for the other one, the product of these probabilities— $0.9 \times 0.7 \times 0.8$ —would be the predicted odds for the full mission. In this hypothetical example, it comes out to be 50%, or one chance in two.

Few operations involving machines, which are far more predictable than men, can be forecast with such mathematical precision, however.

The failure rate for helicopter components is better known than the likelihood of a fierce sandstorm or the chance passage of a busload of Iranians. Yet the risk that could be most precisely predicted for the Iran raid turned out to be radically wrong, because three out of eight helicopters failed and the mission was called off.

In one crucial mechanical problem, Adm. Thomas B. Hayward, chief of naval operations, said, the "inadvertent blocking of a cooling vent" on one of the helicopters may have caused its loss, which may have foiled the entire mission.

The blocked vent caused overheating of the unit that provided electricity to two gyrocompasses aboard the aircraft, Hayward said. Having lost power, the gyros failed, making navigation impossible at the low altitude required to avoid detection by radar.

(On Friday, the Defense Department announced that the vent may have been blocked by a misplaced gear bag and flak jacket.)

That helicopter, lost in a dust storm at the time navigation equipment failed, climbed to a higher altitude and returned safely to the carrier Nimitz.

The helicopter carried most of the spare parts taken on the mission. But Pentagon spokesman Thomas B. Ross said the airborne repair shop did not include a hydraulic pump, which was the part that failed on the last helicopter that went out of commission, unable to lift off from the desert refueling site after it landed there safely.

Mission planners had decided—incorrectly, it turned out—that a spare hydraulic pump was not needed, Ross said, because the pump had a very low rate failure.

Sand screens were intentionally removed from the engines of all eight helicopters to give them slightly more thrust, Ross said. He denied that any failure occurred because of trouble with the engines, which were the only helicopter part protected by the screens.

A totally unanticipated event, on the other hand—the dousing of five helicopters, including the three that failed, with caustic firefighting chemicals and sea water—occurred just 10 minutes after the accident did not result in failure of the aircraft.

When the risks of such mechanical failures are combined with subjective estimates on the performance of men—such as how hard the Iranian terrorists might resist the rescuers—the overall assessment of a mission's chances is extremely difficult to make.

Asked how quantitative and qualitative estimates can be combined, one authority answered, "By praying a lot."

Prof. Martin Shubik of Yale, co-author of a book titled "The War Game," said that military planners can estimate risks only in a more general way, relying heavily on experience. "So when anyone speaks of a calculated risk, he should instead say 'a more-or-less calculated risk,'" Shubik said.

One official suggested that the notoriously fickle nature of helicopters alone could explain Carter's different assessments of the risk of each stage of the mission. Helicopters were to be relied on most heavily in the most risky part of the mission, not at all in the "easiest" part, and only partly in the intermediate phase.

In the final phase, the official said, secrecy no longer would have been necessary while the Americans were being removed from Iran in the C-130 transports. Fighter planes from U.S. carriers could have provided air cover against Iranian fighters—one squadron of which is known to be operation—to offer a better chance of escape.

The highest probability of success in the mission was given to freeing the hostages, which has led to rumors and possibly some deliberate leaks of wrong information by officials here to confuse or mislead the Iranian terrorists.

One report was that U.S. agents had infiltrated Tehran as European businessmen who rented a warehouse to provide the final staging point for the U.S. force that would assault the embassy.

But one knowledgeable official said it was wrong to assume the embassy had to be assaulted. "You might speculate on whether all the terrorists inside are loyal," he said, implying that Iranians among the copters would have helped the U.S. raiders enter.

Some help for the raiders must have been already in place in Tehran. One report claimed friendly Iranians who had been part of the government of the deposed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi had prepared the way for the U.S. force, while another maintained that the raid was to be "an all-American operation."

Hearings are certain in Congress to examine what went wrong, and many of the questions may be answered then.

But the Joint Chiefs still believe that the original plan was "workable," said Adm. Hayward. "We would do it again," he said.

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4 May 1980

CARTER'S JUDGMENT

Delaying High-Risk Raid Lessened Its Chances

By George C. Wilson
and Michael Getler

Washington Post Staff Writers

Vainly waiting for a diplomatic solution, President Carter missed the most opportune time for launching the hostage rescue mission to Iran, and thereby increased the risk of failure, according to government sources.

About last December, military planners from the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned the president that, if he was going to launch a secret raid, he should do so within about 90 days — before the end of March.

By April or before, they warned, desert sandstorms would howl across the Iranian back-country, greatly complicating the long-distance logistics of the raid and lengthening odds against success.

When the mission was aborted 10 days ago, a raging late-April sandstorm in the southern desert of Iran was a principal component of the failure. It forced one helicopter to retreat to the Nimitz aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Oman, grounded another one temporarily in the desert and may have contributed to the technical breakdowns. The mission was scrubbed for want of enough helicopters.

This question of high-risk timing is one of many elements, disclosed by those with inside knowledge, which suggest an understanding of the mission plan that is quite different from that suggested by President Carter and his top military advisers, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Gen. David C. Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

The president and his officials have portrayed the mission as "snake bit" by bad luck and random technological failures, but they insist that the original plan had "good" to "excellent" prospects for success.

To some planners, however, it always looked like a high-risk operation. Indeed, in corroborating details now filtering out, the picture is clear: preparations were made anticipating the possibility of extensive casualties, including perhaps some of the hostages who were to be rescued.

This, in turn, underscores a fundamental change in President Carter's thinking about the long-running crisis. For six months, Carter said again and again that his main purpose was to save the 53 American captives in Tehran. But in launching the desert mission, he concluded that another objective had taken precedence — ending the crisis, once and for all.

Carter, said one administration official, wanted "to lance the boil," even if the outcome fell short of his original goal of rescuing all the hostages in good condition.

"A cancer that has to be removed," according to one adviser.

In fact, at one point the going estimate inside Pentagon and administration councils for a successful mission was as low as one in four, or 25 percent, sources said.

Gen. Jones came close to acknowledging this last week when he said at a Pentagon press conference that "in the initial stages we did not see an option that had a reasonable chance of success.

"After improvements, some in use of technology, exercises, concepts—we came to the conclusion that it was militarily feasible, and all of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—we collectively addressed this—concluded that we had a good chance of success. There were some risks, yes."

Jones and others have steadfastly declined to specify the degree of risk, but one part of the operation that has not been disclosed before suggests heavy casualties were considered a definite possibility.

Besides the C130 transports waiting for rescue helicopters in a secret escape base west of Tehran, sources revealed, the plan called for having giant C141 transports on call in case there were too many dead and wounded to fit inside the two C130s. The casualties would have been flown to a hospital in Egypt, presumably in Cairo.

Although this fits under prudent worst-case planning, the inclusion of the C141s throws new light on Secretary Brown's April 25 assertion that, once the Blue Light commando unit reached the embassy itself, this "was the part of the mission of which they were most confident." Brown said he and the Joint Chiefs had focused on the embassy takeover part of the plan before recommending the mission to Carter.

The apparent reason Carter, Brown and Jones put so much confidence in a plan considered risky by some other insiders was their conviction that the assault force could be called back quickly at almost any "fail-safe" point along the way and that the embassy could be taken by surprise, according to sources.

Brown suggested as much last week when he said "the plan provided for the possibility of terminating the operation because of any difficulties, such as mechanical failure or detection by the Iranians of the mission."

Yesterday sources disclose that an elaborate recall network had been established in Iran, with superb communications linking it all together.

For example, sources said, the 50 to 100 "friendlies" infiltrated into Iran in advance of the rescue attempt were ordered to spread themselves out all along the advance route from the Blue Light teams mountain hideaway east of Tehran to the embassy compound itself. The friendlies included U.S. military specialists and intelligence operatives.

As the commandos approached the city in innocent-looking trucks and buses mixed in with the night traffic, the friendlies were supposed to keep track of them and Iranian security forces every step of the way.

At the first sign that the cover of the mission had been blown, the Blue Light commanders would learn about it from friendlies plugged into the elaborate warning system. Then the commanders would have the option of calling everything off.

If the 90 Blue Light commandos reached Tehran undetected, they would have been assembled in a warehouse in the city staked out as a last-minute check point before racing into the embassy.

The troopers, commanded by Col. Charlie Beckwith, were going to thrust into the embassy like a stilleto, not a broad sword. The plan depended on speed, stealth and deadly marksmanship, not on some super-duper secret weapon like knockout gas.

The Blue Light commandos were going to kill or subdue the guards and herd the hostages to a predesignated rescue point, where the helicopters from the mountaintop hideaway

would swoop down and fly them away to the C130s, which were waiting west of the city.

Blue Light's hand-picked sharpshooters were armed with .45 pistols with silencers and M16 rifles. These sharpshooters were so accurate, one source said, that during training Beck with and a visiting commander of a West German anti-terrorist outfit once confidently sat between target silhouettes while the commandos blasted away with their weapons.

If Beckwith needed outside help during the embassy takeover, he could have called in C130 transports armed with machine guns and 105-millimeter cannon.

The planes' crews were trained to orbit in the night sky over the embassy, "hosing down the streets," as one source put it, to stop any Iranian forces that might have tried to stop the rescue.

Another C130 crew was ready to orbit over the Tehran airport, blasting the runways to stop any Iranian fighter planes which tried to take off from there.

Far to the south, in the Arabian sea and Gulf of Oman, the aircraft carriers Nimitz and Coral Sea had tricky assignments, too. Some of their warplanes were prepared to make a feint

at bombing Iranian oil fields at the head of the Persian Gulf, while others would protect the C130s and C141s flying out of Iran to Egypt with their load of hostages, commandos and perhaps a few of the friendlies.

Under that option, which might not have been exercised at all if the embassy takeover went smoothly, Navy A7 fighter-bombers would have feinted a bombing raid on the oil fields while F4 and F14 fighters would have provided the protective "cap" for the departing transports. Presumably any Iranian planes which got aloft would have raced south to defend the oilfields.

Officials stressed that the warplane option was defensive in nature and not part of any offensive strike against Iran. Indeed, sources say the plan did not include any punitive raids against Iran even in the event of a serious failure of the rescue operation. The idea was to stick to a rescue mission and not to undertake actions that could have inflamed the whole region and possibly driven Iran into Soviet hands.

Officials said it would have been too difficult to try to launch any sizable force of fighter-bombers over Tehran from the carriers. This would have required mid-air refueling at night since, when loaded, these warplanes have a combat radius of only about 300 miles.

The Joint Chiefs opted for going fast and light, counting on speed and surprise for success. This decision, sources said, resulted in paring down elements of one of the many preliminary drafts of the rescue plan finally

Planners anticipated that several Navy RH53 helicopters would fail in the two long hops from the Nimitz in the Gulf of Oman to the mountaintop hideaway east of Tehran, totalling 700 miles. Some planners early on recommended up to 12 to 14 helicopters instead of the eight decided upon.

Although they are not saying so publicly, many military officers now fault the final plan as "too thin," resting on too many unrealistic assumptions. Some contend the obstacles most likely would have gotten worse, not better, as the Blue Light team proceeded beyond Desert One, the refueling site 500 miles inside Iran, toward the embassy. They complain of too few "worst case" protective features in the planning.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) signaled last week that he is going to demand explanations on this point during the Senate Armed Services Committee audit of the rescue attempt.

The committee has scheduled a closed meeting Wednesday to start hearing from participants in the rescue attempt.

Although not yet briefed formally on the plan, Jackson said from what he has learned it did not have "enough redundancy, enough backup. In a mission of this magnitude, in which the whole world is looking at this, and after a series of defeats in Vietnam, it could hamstring the U.S. position in the world. If you are going to do it, there damn well ought to be some backup for contingencies."

Carter obviously felt otherwise as he took what looks like the biggest risk of his presidency—to "lance the boil" of the hostage crisis.

'Rescue' Covers Fears of a Coup The Fifth Column: Who Was Waiting in Teheran? THE MOVING TARGET

By Alexander Cockburn & James Ridgeway

Amidst the first intimations of direct conflict between Iran and the United States the stage could be set for a final, violent resolution of the crisis: sharp military strikes culminating in straight-forward assault on the regime in Iran, to which assault rescue of the hostages would take a very distant, if nonexistent, second place.

In this situation, the response of the Russians and U.S. reaction to their response will be all-important. With the departure of Cyrus Vance, there is now no prudent voice in Carter's crisis meetings. The situation could not be more dangerous. The world picture is very different from 1953, when the U.S. disposed of an Iranian government without undue world commotion.

In the wake of last week's abortive raid, the U.S. has a number of options. The first course, consistently rejected by Carter, but most likely to bring the release of the hostages, would be to make some form of apology for past sins and lower the heat. In other words, treat the hostages like the Pueblo crewmen. This is very unlikely.

The second course would be to let the political situation in Iran unravel further, against a backdrop of escalating tension and confrontation, in which such events as the aircraft encounter of Monday night would become increasingly dangerous.

There may however be a more appealing course for Carter, to move toward a straightforward crushing of the revolution and reconstitution of American influence, as in 1953. The most drastic mode here would be to bomb the oil fields, thereby draining the financial lifeblood of the regime, hastening its collapse, with a rapid thrusting to power of local surrogates from the middle class, and army officer corps.

Slightly less drastic, though with similarly tempting electoral appeal, would be the mining of Iranian harbors, a strategy more complex than might at first appear. Some of the mines would almost certainly end up in Iraqi harbors, and others would probably destroy non-Iranian shipping. Saudi or, indeed, U.S. property under the Liberian flag.

Two weeks ago, in Teheran, when close associates of President Bani-Sadr met to plan strategy, it was agreed by all present that the worst fate that could befall him would be for the U.S. to launch and bring to a successful conclusion an Entebbe-style raid, rescuing the hostages in the U. S. Embassy. Were that to happen, they speculated, then the right-wing Muslim clerics would seize the occasion to charge Bani-Sadr with responsibility for permitting such an outrage. He would be hounded from office, and the clerics' hold on power would be confirmed.

Within days, the team of American commandos landed and came to grief near Tabas. Eight men lay dead, and plans, maps, money—and the corpses—were abandoned amid the wreckage. Had the mission gone forward as planned, at least six "Sea Stallion" helicopters, carrying some 90 men, would have proceeded across the desert to a second rendezvous in the mountains 100 miles east of Teheran. After hiding overnight, the force would have boarded vehicles already at the mountain camp, mingled with the traffic into Teheran, and made its way to yet another rendezvous in a warehouse. The following night the assault on the compound allegedly would have occurred, and the hostages rescued, with the helicopters picking up the survivors from either the embassy or a sports stadium nearby. A last rendezvous with the C-130 was to have taken place in western Iran for final flight from the country.

But the central mystery remains. Who comprised the fifth column in Teheran—the crucial ingredient without which the entire enterprise appears far beyond the frontiers of sober judgment? It was, after all, the fifth column's responsibility to prepare the mountain hideout, provide transportation, arrange for the movement of the troops, shelter them in Teheran, take them to the embassy gates, and finally help them in the assault and ensuing escape.

It has been suggested in Washington that special U.S. forces and CIA operatives were infiltrated into Teheran earlier this year in anticipation of such a mission. This version is not held by some supporters of Bani-Sadr, who have quite a different view of what transpired, one which involves suspicions of a possible coup attempt by leading clergy and government officials, which must be set in the overall context of Iranian politics since the overthrow of the Shah.

The Buried Past

A most remarkable aspect of the Iranian revolution has been that the secrets of a quarter-century of tyranny have remained hidden. Amid the unceasing hubbub of anti-American rhetoric, leaders of the revolution have preserved remarkable discretion in disclosing the details of dealings among the Shah, foreign corporations, politicians, journalists, and government officials.

It is true that some data has been released or made available at the Central Bank in Teheran. Similar access to the archives of such important ministries as Foreign, Defense, and Interior, has not been provided.

Moreover, under the imperious rubric of swift and sure justice, hundreds of important officials from the Shah's reign were executed before they could reveal the true extent of his political and financial dealings.

A few examples: Shortly after the Shah had fled to Cairo and Iran's embassy in Washington was taken over by the revolutionaries, reporters began to clamor for public disclosure of purportedly damning documents concerning payoffs and bribes. Acting ambassador to the U.S. Rouhani claimed he had sent the files back to Teheran. In Teheran, Rouhani's father, Ebrahim Yazdi—a close associate of Khomeini—insisted the files had been lost.

Last summer, a visitor to the Ministry of National Guidance in Teheran happened to spot on the cluttered desk of a secretary to Minister Minaji several letters discussing payoffs from the Shah's government to American journalists. The secretary was preparing to throw these letters in the wastebasket. The visitor promptly asked if he might take them. After much discussion, Minaji became involved. He promised to copy the letters and deliver them to the visitor. They never arrived.

Such withholding of information that would presumably buttress assaults on the previous regime and expose the Shah's accomplices, agents, and beneficiaries has been a recurring feature of revolutionary Iran.

Within a month of the seizure of power, the late Ayatollah Taleghani, a key member of the Revolutionary Council, informed another visitor that the Council had reached a consensus: the revolution would soon mount a Third World equivalent of the Nuremberg Tribunals which would bring all culpable parties from the Shah's years to trial. Material witnesses before such a tribunal would include the leaders of the Shah's government, among them Prime Minister Hoveida.

But the rising curtain dropped abruptly.

A fierce propaganda campaign was mounted for swift revolutionary justice, lent fervor by the dissemination of atrocity photographs of torture victims. The Ayatollah Beheshti pressed forward with his revolutionary courts and in short order dispatched 500 material witnesses to the bosom of Allah.

The most telling implementation of this policy concerned Prime Minister Hoveida. He was tried first. Four to five hours before Bani-Sadr was scheduled to interview him, Hoveida was hauled away by the revolutionary court and shot.

The suppression of evidence and rapid extermination of witnesses soon provoked the questions: Who had so manifest an interest in hiding the deeds and data of the Shah's years, and why? In any post-revolutionary situation, there is an abundance of government officials, army commanders, intellectuals, and so on, with much to hide. In this particular instance, suspicions were circulated about many alleged revolutionaries, and four in particular: Beheshti himself, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, now foreign minister; Mostafa Tachamran now defense minister; and Yazdi.

Return of the Past

All, like many under the Shah's regime, had lived abroad; Beheshti in West Germany, the other three in the U.S. Their pasts appear murky, except for one fact: they were all activists within the Muslim Students Association, a body now viewed with considerable interest and mistrust in Teheran, since it received funding from American Friends of the Middle East, identified in the 1960s as a conduit of the CIA, a director of which was Kermit Roosevelt, who organized the 1953 coup against Premier Mossadegh. Two of the leaders, Tachamran and Yazdi, reportedly left the MSA and became leaders in the Iranian Students Association, which became anti-Shah in the early 1960s. Throughout, the lines between the CIA and its different siblings are blurred. Scarcely a student group did not have some kind of connection with the CIA. Not everyone felt impelled to conclude that membership in the MSA meant CIA con-

trol, but the suspicion remained that the past, for those notables and others like them, remained a sensitive topic, not immune to blackmail and kindred pressures. None was anti-American, except in the most rhetorical sense.

The Battle in Teheran

Against this background, consider the current situation in Iran. Easily the most radical in the deeply divided leadership is President Bani-Sadr, elected three months ago by a 70 per cent margin. Bani-Sadr, despite popular acclaim, has little real power. He has no organizational roots and, until now, has not been able to control a single ministry, although he does have some sway over the Central Bank and the ministry devoted to radio and TV.

Arrayed against the president is the Islamic Republican Party, controlled by conservative Muslim clerics, led by Beheshti. The party controls 10 of the 15 provinces, and dominates what was left of the Shah's Pahlavi Foundation, which gives it a financial base. It controls a vast urban renewal-type project called The Struggle for Reconstruction, which has a large budget. Folded into this project are many of the Shah's properties, vast amounts of oil money, and other income-yielding ventures. The project dispenses patronage across the country. In addition, the IRP controls the Revolutionary Guards—about 16,000-strong—ill-trained but potent in Iran's disorganized state. The party also controls the revolutionary committees, which are now being merged with local police forces. Its leading members control the key ministries. It is, in short, a government unto itself.

The odds against Bani-Sadr appear to be heavy in the present struggle for power being waged under the erratic overall supervision of Khomeini. Bani-Sadr has in his favor the legitimacy of having won the popular vote and whatever benefits may accrue from the rising popular dislike of the mullahcracy, notably among the middle class, the largest of any Third World country. In the midst of a disintegrating economy, Bani-Sadr has gathered around him intelligent advisers with a rather clearer idea than the mullahs of what should be done.

His posture regarding the hostages has made more and more sense with the passing months: while the taking of the hostages may originally have been a radical act, the reaction generally has been bad for Iran and beneficial to its enemies. Bani-Sadr mentions the rise of Reagan, the increase in U.S. defense spending, and the reinvigoration of imperialistic self-confidence and sense of virtue.

The battle lines are clear and associated. Bani-Sadr now sees the situation this way: not only was the fifth column conceivably inspired by one or another of the leading Muslim clerics—Beheshti or Tachamran are names mentioned—but the planned release of the hostages was part of a process designed to overthrow Bani-Sadr.

The failure of the mission has at least temporarily stalled the crisis, with popular enthusiasm for the victory over the great Satan's helicopters attributing overall generalship to Allah and his representative, Khomeini. Bani-Sadr will attempt to gain control of certain ministries. Finance, agriculture and commerce are mentioned. He will also try to reorganize sectors of the armed forces, which are nominally under his control. Thus, his preferred course is to inch his way to real power.

The omens are not seen as auspicious for this strategy. A firmer but alternate course would have the president step defiantly beyond the clergy and make an alliance with the Islamic leftists in the Mujahidin group, which has a political organization. The problem here is that Khomeini regards Islamic leftists as agents of Satan, and Bani-Sadr may not feel he can risk any form of rupture with the 12th century and its fanatical representative today.

Within the next couple of weeks, matters may be clarified. Terrorism is on the increase in Teheran, and the fear of a coup is waxing in the Bani-Sadr camp.

What the unsuccessful raid may presage—at whatever risk in confronting the Russians—is the more determined prosecution not merely of attempts to release the hostages but restoration of American economic and political interests in Iran. Full circle back to the fall of Mossadegh.

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

The New Leakers

The torrent of leaks by Carter administration officials that instantly followed the aborted rescue mission is an intelligence fiasco that may cost the United States more dearly than the fiasco in the desert itself.

Besides jeopardizing the lives of U.S. agents in Tehran, the massive spillage of official secrets betrays to the world a government out of control. "This criminal act could not have taken place if Jimmy Carter were in charge of his own administration," one well-placed specialist familiar with covert operations told us. "There is no one around able to compel silence."

Such comments in intelligence and national security circles are the talk of the town. While Soviet propaganda seizes on the leaks to trumpet U.S. subversion against Iran, senior officials in Washington are dumbfounded and dismayed at how secrets denied to Congress are leaked to the news media. The fragile intelligence system has suffered a relapse, and tarnished U.S. credibility has been further undermined.

Who is leaking? Possibly military officers who never thought the plan would work, trying to clear their skirts. Possibly defenders of the mission who believe that the more known about it, the better it will look to critics. Senior officials claim two things: first, President Carter has ordered silence; second, neither he nor they know the origin of the leaks.

Obviously, this has endangered undercover Americans exposed by leak as having been assigned key roles in Tehran for later stages of the three-phased rescue attempt. But deeper implications stem from Moscow's eager use of the leaks.

Soviet commentators in Moscow, picking up leaked secrets from the U.S. press and television, have been systematically spilling inside information about the U.S. rescue operation across the pages of Pravda and Izvestia. "Internal counterrevolutionary forces" were targeted for on-the-spot help to the U.S. rescue team, Izvestia informed its readers April 29.

On May 1, Pravda's top political writer, Yuriy Zhukov, backed up his charge that the United States was out to destroy the Islamic republic. He cited evidence leaked in the United States that there was a "fifth column" of undercover Americans allegedly on the ground in Tehran.

Such alleged revelations would be expected, even if Soviet opinion organs were manufacturing them. What makes these Soviet reports so damaging to the United States is that every intelligence service in the free world knows they were in fact picked up from reasonably accurate reports leaked from within a Carter administration helpless to prevent it.

Warnings have been informally delivered to U.S. intelligence agencies that allied foreign intelligence services are going to stop cooperating with the United States for a time. The reason: the United States has proved once again, in even more humiliating fashion than before, that it cannot protect its intelligence methods.

This same charge was made during the post-Watergate crisis of the Central Intelligence Agency, when secrets were sprayed around the world amidst non-stop congressional investigations of supposed excesses. The new leakers are U.S. officials inside Jimmy Carter's own bureaucracy who feel so little restraint from above that, whatever their purposes, they have taken upon themselves the intimate detailing of the nation's disastrous failure.

Intelligence officials have drafted a letter to Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti asking for an immediate FBI

investigation. The letter has been held up. Such FBI probes seldom discover anything. Worse, if anybody charged with violating security laws goes to court, it becomes impossible to protect any secrets at all.

But the president may yet order in the FBI. So far, he has been inclined against an investigation started in the suspicious and supercharged political atmosphere following the rescue failure. He could change his mind if the steadily building resentment on Capitol Hill should explode.

That might happen soon. Senior intelligence officials are being called for unannounced appearances before congressional committees. Their orders are clear: give no details of the aborted rescue effort.

This will enrage members of Congress who see the leaking bureaucracy out of control, a symptom of an administration losing its capacity to govern. That raises again the question of whether a country that cannot keep a secret, even at the risk of its own men's lives, can long control its destiny.

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"The United States has proved once again, in even more humiliating fashion, that it cannot protect its intelligence methods."

Pentagon Reports on Rescue Effort But Senate Is Denied Some Details

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 7 — The Defense Department made public today a long report on last month's abortive attempt to rescue the American hostages in Iran, but it declined to provide senators with information on how the mission was to have been conducted had it not been canceled.

The 22-page report, submitted to the Senate Armed Services Committee, is the most extensive official description so far of the background and execution of the unsuccessful rescue operation. Pentagon aides said it was designed, in part, to answer critics who suggest that the raid was ill conceived and too risky.

In a memorandum attached to the report, Gen. David C. Jones of the Air Force, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that "we are conducting a detailed review" of the mission, "identifying mistakes, lessons learned and actions required."

Testimony by Key Commanders

The report went to Capitol Hill as the Armed Services Committee held daylong closed hearings with the key participants in the operations, including the overall mission commander, Maj. Gen. James Vaught of the Army, and Col. Charlie A. Beckwith of the Army, leader of the commando team that was to have stormed the embassy compound in Teheran.

Senate aides said that General Vaught, Colonel Beckwith and other military witnesses had declined to discuss the whole mission, only the phase that was completed before the decision was taken to cancel the raid because of helicopter malfunctions.

The Pentagon's reluctance to discuss its entire plan for the operation annoyed some members of the committee. Senator Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington, is known to have complained that more details had been provided to the news media than to the Congress.

Other senators expressed annoyance over unauthorized disclosures to the news media on the operation. Senator Birch Bayh, the Indiana Democrat who heads the Intelligence Committee, called on the Federal Bureau of Investigation to begin an inquiry into the matter.

Bayh Letter to F.B.I. Chief

In a letter to William H. Webster, Director of the F.B.I., Mr. Bayh said it was necessary "to mobilize whatever forces are necessary to investigate and put an end to this destructive practice."

Aides said that Mr. Bayh, in particular, was concerned about news reports saying that the commando mission was to have been aided by intelligence agents who had covertly entered Iran weeks before the rescue attempt.

At the Senate committee hearings, Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, praised the rescue

attempt, calling it "the best planned mission in my 40 years of military experience I've ever seen." But Senator Jackson seemed skeptical, saying that he had not been given sufficient details to determine whether the raid was "wise or prudent."

Senator John G. Tower, Republican of Texas, commended the "outstanding professionalism and uncommon courage" displayed during the raid, but also called for the formation of a new, antiterrorist command that "would include, under a single headquarters, all of the resources essential to the successful planning and implementation of such operations."

Senate aides said that Mr. Tower's proposal reflected concerns within the committee that the rescue attempt may have been hampered by a lack of cooperation among the various military units involved in the mission.

Size of Force Is Discussed

In its report, the Pentagon dealt with several issues that had been raised about the mission, including the question of whether a force of 90 commandos and a maximum of eight helicopters was sufficient to rescue the hostages. Stressing that "secrecy was paramount in the operation, the report said that "a larger, more elaborate force, with its correspondingly larger supporting infrastructure, posed an increased danger of a fatal leak, which could have risked the lives not only of the rescue force, but of the hostages whom they were planning to free."

The report also defended the decision to rely on United States Navy RH-53D helicopters for the mission, reporting that their range and payload was suited for the raid and that their "familiarity as a fleet aircraft would help conceal their presence in Iran's nearby waters."

The report went on to say that "the pilots selected were the best and the crew composition was specially adjusted for this mission."

Question of Copter Maintenance

"In view of the flight conditions actually encountered during the night of 24-25 April, this experience paid off," the report asserted.

On the crucial question of helicopter maintenance, the report said that a "special clandestine procedure had been established within the naval aviation supply system" to insure that mechanics obtained parts in "a timely fashion without revealing the true purpose."

The helicopter crews, the report continued, arrived on the aircraft carrier Nimitz four days before the mission, adding: "By the time the mission was ready to launch, the crews were totally satisfied that they had not only the best helicopters available but also the best maintenance and the highest prospects for success at any point in their training."

Raging Debate over the Desert Raid

Critics ask the Pentagon: Was it too little—or too much?

Three C-130 Hercules transport planes roared low across the Florida panhandle last week, two flying tightly as a pair, one trailing without its partner. This is the traditional "missing buddy" formation of the U.S. Air Force, a symbol of mourning for lost fliers. On the ground, in a green park just inside the gates of Hurlburt Field, some of the toughest men in the armed services could not suppress their tears.

* * * *

Meanwhile, investigations were begun by Congress and the Pentagon into what happened during the rescue and why it failed. Carter firmly defended his decision to make the attempt. He reaffirmed his confidence in the Pentagon's plan for the raid as "a fine operation that everyone believed had a good chance for success." And, he argued, using one of the year's more improbable euphemisms, "there is a deeper failure than that of incomplete success, and that is the failure to attempt a worthy effort, a failure to try."

Nonetheless, a worldwide debate was raging over the raid. A Pentagon whose planes had not even been detected while flying into Iran, much less shot at, now was barraged by bombs of criticism. Some were hurled wildly by armchair strategists, others by more knowledgeable experts.

The main target was the rescue plan. Some critics charge that it was too lean and spare, with far too few men and aircraft to overwhelm the militants holding the embassy in crowded Tehran, pick up the hostages and escape safely. On the other hand, other critics argue that the plan was too sophisticated and complex, with too many staging points and too many chances for detection before the assault on the embassy.

Under Phase 1 of the raid, three C-130s carrying some 90 air commandos and three others transporting fuel for helicopters took off from an airfield in Egypt. Eight Sikorsky RH-53 helicopters, flying in pairs, left the nuclear carrier *Nimitz* in the Arabian Sea. All were to meet at "Desert One," an unimproved landing strip in the Great Salt Desert south of Tehran.

Phase 2, never carried out, called for the C-130s to fly to Oman and the helicopters to ferry the commandos to a mountain hideout some 100 miles from Tehran. The raiding

party would stay in hiding there throughout the next day. As darkness fell, the men would climb aboard trucks and buses, which would have been supplied by an undisclosed number of CIA agents and U.S. Special Forces men who had entered Iran earlier, some disguised as European businessmen.

The vehicles would slip one by one into Tehran and rendezvous at a warehouse that had been acquired by an American agent. During the night the commandos would divide into two assault teams. A small party would head for the Foreign Ministry building, where U.S. Charge d'Affaires Bruce Laingen and two other U.S. diplomats were held captive. The other commandos would drive to the embassy compound, where 50 Americans were imprisoned.

Surprise and speed were essential. The attackers, confident that they knew where the hostages were within the compound, planned to scale the embassy walls and shoot or capture the guards. The assault team was armed with automatic weapons but, contrary to some published reports, did not carry disabling gas, which would have knocked out the captives and required them to be carried to safety.

As the assault began, four of the choppers were to fly to the embassy's soccer field. In the last stage of the assault, the hostages (by now joined by the three from the Foreign Ministry) and the 90 commandos would all leave in the four choppers. They would join the C-130s, which would have flown from Oman, at yet another airstrip, "Desert Two." There the choppers would be abandoned, and everyone would fly to safety in the transport planes.

All during the rescue, Navy fighter aircraft from the carriers *Nimitz* and *Coral Sea* would fly along the Iranian border, ready to dart toward Tehran if the assault party got into trouble. The U.S. planners did not fear Iran's once potent air force. Of the country's 76 advanced F-14 fighters, no more than seven can fly, and none can fire its Phoenix missiles, owing to the lack of maintenance. Iran has 187 operational F-4 fighters, 50 of

for night combat. Moreover, insists a Pentagon official, "we knew where all their planes were," meaning that they could have been destroyed on the ground if that had been deemed necessary.

American military experts not involved in the mission's planning say that whether the scheme was sound depended on what kind of help the rescuers expected once they reached Tehran. The mission commanders, as well as Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman David Jones and Defense Secretary Harold Brown, have refused to comment on speculation that units in the Iranian military or even defectors among the militants who were guarding the embassy were ready to support the operation.

One former U.S. official familiar with Iran finds the mountain hideout scheme more practical than it might sound, noting that there are several well-concealed plateaus in the remote mountains. But few experts can understand the contention of both Carter and Brown that the Tehran phase of the plan would have been easier than getting the assault team into position in the desert in the first place: both of them have refused to explain why they think so. Even some of the military planners concede that the complex mission violated an old Army rule called KISS, meaning "Keep it simple, stupid."

Other questions about the raid and the answers insofar as they were known last week:

Did the plan risk too many lives?

Pentagon officials have adamantly denied reports in Washington of a CIA estimate that 60% of the 53 hostages would probably have been killed in the rescue attempt. But *TIME* has learned that initial casualty estimates once ran as high as 200 fatalities, including both hostages and rescuers. The final plan did, indeed, envision the possibility of losing from 15 to 20 hostages.

Did the military planners want a bigger force?

Outsiders claiming firsthand information from the Special Forces officers involved in the mission insist that earlier plans called for at least 600 men and 30 helicopters in the assault force. Some of these critics contend that the plan was scaled down by President Carter and his National Security Council in the belief that a smaller strike would prove less bloody, less provocative to Iran's Arab neighbors and more politically acceptable at home.

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Indeed, in the months of planning that began within days of the seizure of the embassy last November, a wide range of rescue options was considered. "In the initial stages," General Jones said last week, "we did not see an option that had a reasonable chance of success. We tried and we trained and we exercised, and nothing was denied to us by anybody." Some of the earlier plans did envision a larger force but were discarded as impractical. One reason: the bigger the operation, the more difficult it would be to keep secret. So far, there is no evidence that the more restrictive plan was forced on the military by civilian officials.

What changed to make any plan at all seem feasible?

The planners are secretive about this. Yet it seems clear that they had been more successful than expected in getting covert agents into Iran, gaining support from people already in the country and picking up precise intelligence on where the hostages were and how they were guarded. Over the months, the militants had decreased their numbers and vigilance. Also, the U.S. had launched two secret military satellites in late November, completing the Air Force's positioning of six command and communications satellites around the world, including one over the Indian Ocean. The system could send almost instantaneous messages between the Pentagon and rescue commanders in the field. It might even have helped covert agents get information out of Tehran.

What went wrong with the helicopters?

The mission was canceled when three of the eight helicopters heading toward Desert One broke down while flying through a blinding sandstorm. An electrical power supply on one craft overheated and failed, knocking out the gyrocompass, the horizon indicator and the cockpit lights. The crew flew back to the *Nimitz*, making a dangerous landing, with fuel tanks nearly empty.

On the second helicopter, the crew set down in the desert because a warning light signaled that the chopper's 34-ft.-long rotor blade was in danger of failing. They discovered that it was cracked. The crew and all classified material were picked up by another helicopter.

The crew of the third damaged chopper pushed on to Desert One, despite the failure of a pump that propels the craft's back-up hydraulic system. It is essential, supplementing the primary hydraulic system, which operates the helicopter's control. Because the pump could not be repaired, the helicopter had to be taken out of service, and the rescue mission had to be scrubbed. Planners figured that the rescue required at least six helicopters. There were no back-up helicopters on the *Nimitz*; even if there had been, they could not have been flown to Desert One before daylight.

the malfunction?

Although the sandstorms were common to all three helicopter failures, the mission leaders do not blame their problems on the weather. Pentagon officials disclosed that the choppers' 150-lb. sand screens had been removed to increase the engines' thrust by 3%, a possibly critical safety margin. But the screens are designed only to protect the engines from long-term wear from dirt, which apparently was not a factor in any of the breakdowns.

Investigators suspect that the overheating in the first craft resulted from a cooling vent having been blocked by a crewman's flak jacket and bag. If so, that obviously was human error. The swirling sand, investigators say, could not have cracked the rotor blade in the second craft. The cause may never be known. The failure of the third chopper's pump also is a mystery and presumably could not have been caused by sand because the helicopters' hydraulic systems are well sealed.

Was maintenance of the helicopters faulty?

From President Carter down to mission officers, this suggestion has been vehemently denied. To the contrary, they say, the helicopters got unusually meticulous care, even though their crews did not know of the impending mission. Fifteen maintenance men were assigned to each of the eight helicopters aboard the *Nimitz*. In addition, two civilian helicopter technical experts, including one from Sikorsky, were sent to the carrier. Almost daily, maintenance pilots flew the choppers to make sure that they were in top condition. In fact, the crews tending the RH-53s recently won Navy awards for their exceptional maintenance record. The U.S. military may have a general problem in retaining skilled maintenance men, the mission planners concede, but the best were available on board the *Nimitz*.

Just eleven hours before the start of the mission, a sailor accidentally hit a fire control switch, dousing five of the RH-53s with sea water and foam. The aircraft were rinsed with fresh water and inspected. No visible damage was found.

Why were the helicopters not destroyed at Desert One?

So far, the mission leaders have not provided a satisfactory explanation. Fail-

the choppers enabled Iranian officials to obtain mission maps and other secret papers. Whether the documents revealed the identity of some U.S. agents or collaborators in Tehran is not known but seems improbable. The mission leaders suggested that after one helicopter collided with a parked C-130 at the landing strip and both erupted into flames, the resulting shrapnel and flying debris from exploding ammunition threatened to damage four other C-130s and strand the entire party. When asked about this last week, Colonel Charlie Beckwith, who was in charge of the 90-man assault force, said tersely: "That wasn't my job. I can't talk to that. I got all my stuff out of there." Perhaps protectively, the Navy has not revealed the name of the Marine colonel who commanded the helicopter crews once they left the *Nimitz*.

Did the commandos want to continue the mission?

Friends of Beckwith, 51, a true, if little-publicized, hero of Special Forces missions in Viet Nam, insist that he returned crestfallen from the failure in the desert, angry at being ordered to end the effort and on the verge of resigning his commission. But last week he appeared at a select Pentagon press conference at which photos were banned to protect his potential future usefulness in covert operations. He brusquely denied all allegations that he had opposed the decision to abort.

From the start, Beckwith said, everyone had agreed that if the rescue team could not fly out of Desert One with at least six helicopters, the mission could not go forward. After two of the eight helicopters had failed to reach the landing strip, Beckwith had been relieved at the arrival, although late, of the sixth. But then the pilot of the third damaged chopper told Beckwith that it could not fly. The colonel's one-word reply: "Bullshit."

Beckwith went to the overall on-site commander, Air Force Colonel James Kyle, and asked him to take a look at the ailing chopper. "Let's confirm this," Beckwith said. "I want to make sure." When Kyle climbed down from the critical craft to report that it was indeed useless, Beckwith said last week, his own reaction was immediate: "Sir, my recommendation is that we abort." The commander gave Beckwith a chance to change his mind, asking "Would you consider taking five and going ahead? Think about it before you answer me. You're the guy that's got to shoulder this." After only a few seconds of reconsideration, Beckwith said sadly, "There's just no way."

When a reporter persisted, asking again if Beckwith had not argued in favor of continuing the mission, the rugged six-footer bristled and replied in a soft Southern accent: "With

all due respect, sir, you don't know where you're coming from. I've been there before, and I'm not about to be a party of half-assed loading on a bunch of aircraft and going up and murdering a bunch of the finest soldiers in the world. I ain't gonna do that. It was a no-win situation."

After the order to abort had been confirmed from both the White House and the Pentagon, Beckwith recalled, his first thought was "My God, I'm gonna fail." He ordered his men into the C-130s to take off, then rushed to gather up all classified papers and gear. He was aboard a C-130 when he looked out of a window. He recalled: "A 130 all of a sudden exploded. It was one hell of a fire. On that 130 were 39 of my people." Beckwith said there was no way to get the bodies out of the fire "unless you wanted to burn up everybody who's going in there." Said the much decorated and fearless officer: "I sat there and cried." ■

Iran Raid Maps Pinpoint Route Of Rescue Bid

Associated Press

Had American commandos been able to get into Tehran in their attempt to free the American hostages last month, they apparently would have made their final assault on the U.S. Embassy from an abandoned construction site, according to maps and documents obtained by ABC News.

The maps outline the routing, rescue and escape plans of the ill-fated attempt to free the 50 Americans held in Iran since Nov. 4. The April 24 mission was aborted in the Iranian desert, however, and eight Americans died when a would-be rescue helicopter collided with a C-130 transport plane.

ABC said it obtained the maps and documents from British sources with close ties to the militants holding the American hostages. It said the documents were taken by Iranian authorities from the wreckage of a U.S. helicopter left behind in the desert.

In a later broadcast, ABC identified the source as Julian Manyon, a British journalist. In a live interview from London, Manyon said he obtained the documents from an Iranian photographer who photographed them when they were shown briefly at the occupied U.S. Embassy.

Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali held the documents when the bodies of the raiders who died in the unsuccessful rescue attempt were displayed at the U.S. Embassy before being released to Swiss authorities.

Administration sources, who asked not to be identified, confirmed that the documents were authentic. It marked the first confirmation that at least some classified material was left behind when the American rescue team pulled out.

Pentagon officials previously have described how the plan called for the American commandos to enter Tehran by ground vehicles, make their way to the embassy and free the hostages, who presumably would have been picked up by

American helicopters landing either in the embassy compound or nearby.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown, interviewed by ABC last night, said that none of the documents the network obtained compromised national security.

The material obtained from ABC showed how the commandos were to drive into Tehran after gathering at a secret "mountain hideaway." According to the maps, the convoy was apparently to have driven to a housing construction site abandoned since the downfall of the shah. The site also was large enough to allow helicopters to land.

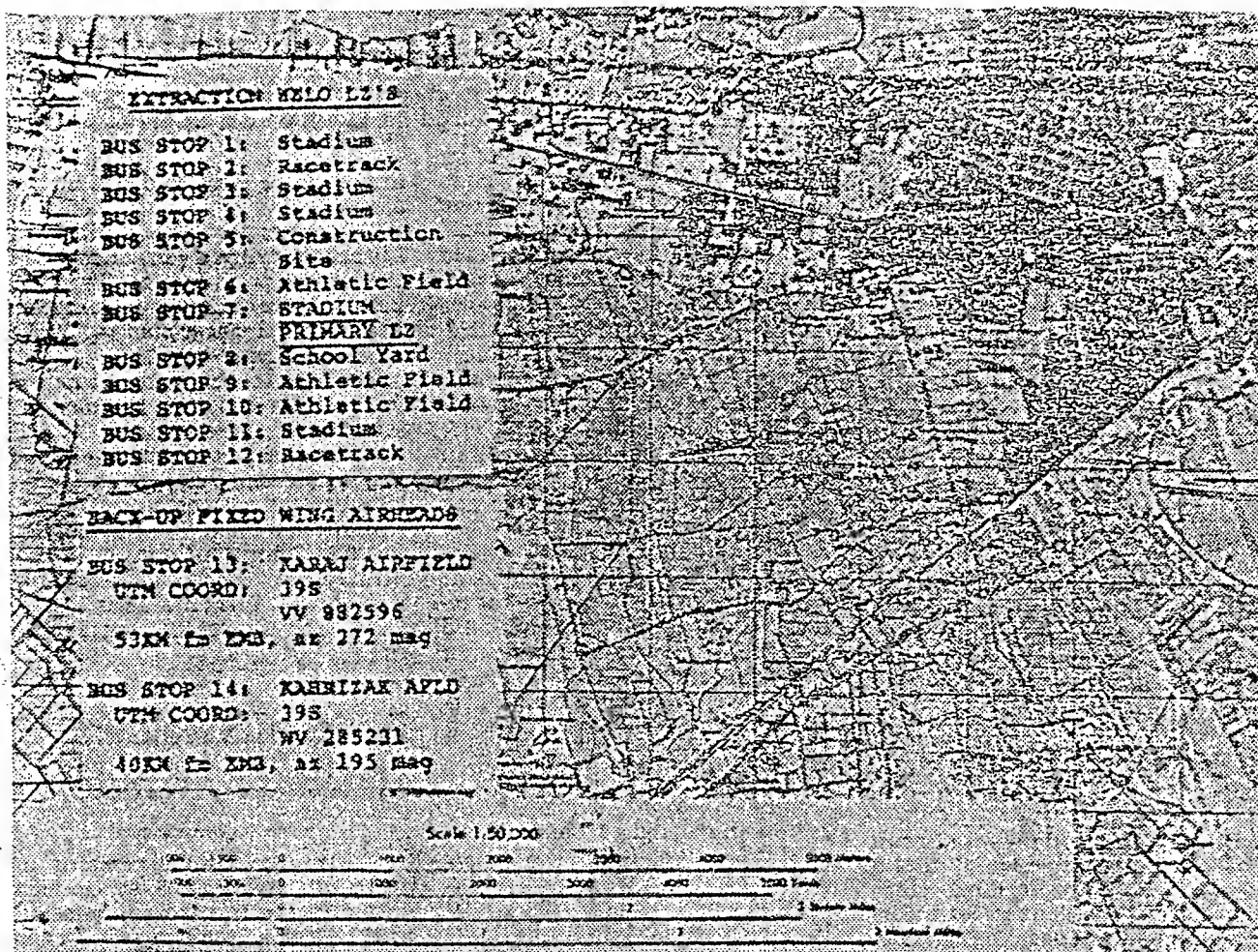
After freeing the hostages, the Americans were to be picked up at a number of rendezvous points, including a football stadium next to the embassy. Street lights were to

have served as markers for the chopper pilots.

The maps also detailed two airfields from which C-130s would carry the commandos and the freed hostages out of Iran.

After the mission failed — because of the failure of three of the eight helicopters — the Iranian militants moved the American hostages to a number of locations throughout Iran.

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This is a copy of one of the maps released last night by ABC News which it said was made from an original left behind in Iran by the American commandos in last

month's aborted hostage-rescue effort. The legend (left) pinpoints locations of landing sites for helicopter and back-up planes in Tehran.